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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG FARES BETTER IN JULY 1 MOGADISHU
FIGHTING; SUFFERS REVERSE JULY 2

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reason: 1.4 (b).

¶1. (C) Summary: Contacts report that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) did well in fighting in Mogadishu's Karan District July 1. They ascribed the comparative success to a switch to more defensive tactics, and the recent provision of ammunition and weapons. The TFG claimed to have killed two foreigners, a Pakistani and Eritrean, who they planned to display at a press conference July 2. The AMISOM Political Advisor and AMISOM Commander General Okello confirmed the better TFG performance to UNPOS Deputy Charles Petrie, who visited Mogadishu July 2. Petrie said that the TFG leadership was visibly bolstered by their July 1 success.

¶2. (C) The government's good performance July 1 was followed by a debacle July 2, as has so often been the case since the most recent round of fighting began May 7. When fighting ended after sundown on July 2, al-Shabaab appeared to be in firm control of Karan District, and had pushed TFG forces back to the old seaport. TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke and Police Commissioner Qeybdiid blamed fatigue, reinforcements for al-Shabaab, and sputtering supplies of ammunition from AMISOM for their July 2 losses. End summary.

¶2. (C) Accounts of July 1 fighting in Mogadishu agree that it was heavy at times and concentrated in the Karan and Sana'a Junction areas. The bulk of the combat was performed by TFG forces subordinate to Indha Adde, TFG land forces Commander "Gamadhule," warlord Musa Sude, and forces from President Sharif's Agonyare sub-clan. AMISOM alleged late evening July 1 that the TFG had killed many al-Shabaab fighters. They put the number at eighty. (Another, generally reliable, source in Mogadishu pegged the number of al-Shabaab killed at a more realistic thirteen.)

¶3. (C) In July 1 telephone conversations, TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke and Intelligence Chief Mohammed Sheikh ascribed the success to a more defensive strategy. That approach, they said, also accounted for the smaller number of TFG losses. They estimated the number of TFG killed at five.

¶4. (C) Mohammed Sheikh offered varying accounts of the capture and/or killing of foreign fighters on July 1. On the morning of July 2, he told Somalia Unit that he had possession of the bodies of three foreign fighters: one an Oromo or Eritrean, another a black African. UNPOS Deputy Charles Petrie, who was in Mogadishu July 2, was told that the TFG had the bodies of an Eritrean and a Pakistani, and planned to exhibit them at a press conference. (A Hisbul al-Islam spokesman denied that the TFG had any foreigners, and challenged the government to display them if it did.)

¶5. (C) Petrie, who traveled with UNPOS Military Advisor Paul Kellett to Mogadishu, described the TFG on the morning of July 2 as more confident. (TFG Minister of Defense "Gandi" flew to Mogadishu with UNPOS, but returned with Petrie and

Kellett to Nairobi at the end of the day.) Al-Shabaab had for the first time, they said, not been able to retrieve its dead, and had not been able to make inroads on TFG positions.

¶16. (C) When fighting resumed July 2, it appeared that al-Shabaab had the initiative. Prime Minister Sharmarke and TFG Police Commissioner Qeybdiid told us that TFG troops were "tired," that al-Shabaab had been reinforced from Baidoa, and that AMISOM was doling out insufficient amounts of ammunition from its supplies.

¶17. (C) The al-Shabaab counter-offensive intensified at about 3:00 P.M., July 2, and resulted in al-Shabaab winning firm control of Karan District and the Marina. TFG troops were pushed back to the Lido or old seaport by about 7:00 P.M., with the Hisbul al-Islam spokesman reportedly threatening to occupy Villa Somalia when combat resumed July 3.

Comment

¶18. (C) The July 1 - 2 fighting followed a familiar, seesaw pattern which, each time leaves the TFG with less territory in Mogadishu. It does not appear that AMISOM engaged to defend the TFG in the July 2 fighting. AMISOM Special Envoy Ambassador Bwakira told us July 2 that AMISOM would be prepared to defend Villa Somalia if al-Shabaab attempted to press its advantage on July 3. The TFG leadership, according to Qeybdiid, was attempting to determine what went wrong in a meeting of its Security Council on the evening of July 2.
RANNEBERGER